

(Tonglen Edits Khenpo Samdup teaching)

Would you like to hear a special Tonglen meditation? By special, I mean a little bit different way to do Tonglen. This Tonglen, Garchen Rinpoche received from Khenpo Munsel while in prison. It is a little bit different way of meditating. It is very powerful, but that also depends on the individual. You must put your energy into the practice.

So generally speaking, all practice is actually Tonglen. Dharma practice is different ways of doing Tonglen meditation. Specifically, we are talking about practicing love and compassion by using a different method. The practitioners who use this Tonglen are transformed. They are transformed in their minds. They grow their love and compassion. This practice changes them. They become a special practitioner.

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I heard that in the prison, many teachers and Garchen Rinpoche received this teaching from Khenpo Munsel. They practiced this Tonglen in the prison and they were transformed. They were changed. In the prison at that time, they could not receive many teachings. But they talked like we are right now. The information that was given to them was short and they practiced it. Then they were transformed.

Actually, whether Dharma benefits us or not depends on how we care about it. How we appreciate it. If someone doesn't appreciate it, they receive all of these teachings but stay the same. There is nothing different. They cannot change anything.

If you put in the energy, you can transform. Even if you only practiced the precious human body, that practice also can transform you. This morning, we practiced four different levels of mindfulness meditations. If you use that practice, your life is changed. Everything becomes transformed. Right? If we don't practice and we don't care much, we are just receiving teachings. "I want this. I want that." At that point, people are just collecting Dharma and collecting teachers. Actually, they stay the same. Nothing is different.

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It becomes more about pride. They say, "I received this teaching and I received this teaching." Some teacher is coming and they say, "I already have this teaching. I don't need it." Whether you need it or not, you must look to yourself to determine. As long as we have emotions, we need it, right? But they don't recognize it that way.

Dharma teachings are not like school education. Do you understand what I mean? You went to school already, right? First grade, you don't have to go back there again. You are in second grade. So you don't have to go back to first grade again. If you are in high school, you don't have to go back to primary school. When you are in college, you don't have to go back to high school, right?

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People think that way about Dharma. That is a big misunderstanding. Dharma practice is like our food—breakfast, lunch, dinner—everyday we have to eat, right? You can't say I don't need breakfast tomorrow because I already ate. So today, you eat and tomorrow you need breakfast, too. Then you eat tomorrow and you need to eat the day after tomorrow.

Dharma teachings mean that you have to practice the same practices every day after that and also, you have to receive teachings all the time. Otherwise, you receive teachings one time and they are gone.

They go in the right ear and out the left ear. They don't stay there. So that's why we have to use this all of the time and receive the same teachings again and again.

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I shared this Tonglen meditation a couple of times and I practiced it a couple of times. But I didn't do it this year, really. So what I share, I may make some mistakes. But if I do make some mistakes, I can fix them. I'll let you know, ok? That is the reason we have to do this often. Otherwise it does not really stay in the mind. If it does not stay in the mind, when we are ready to do something, we forget the practice.

This Tonglen meditation is an example. Say you see someone suffering. You could use that object and practice Tonglen meditation. But usually we forget to do that. Even if you have heard these teachings, you forget, I am sure. I forget, too.

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So right now, if we are going to do Tonglen meditation, we need an object. Right now, there is so much suffering of this disease in China. I saw in the news that there are not enough doctors and medicines-- not enough to provide and take care of the sick, right? There are deaths in the hospitals, everywhere. There is so much suffering. We must think about the whole thing. Then it becomes our own experience. Right now we see this in the news, but our own experience is totally different.

So we bring their experience to mind and think of exchanging. Tonglen means exchanging. Right now, here, we are happy. Relaxed. The weather is perfect here in Florida. It is the best place in the wintertime. We have these good conditions, right? We say we are getting sleepy and we use air conditioning. We can go easily to the beach. There are all of these special, beautiful lakes. We have all of these conditions, right?

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We must recognize that we have these conditions of joy and happiness. So for those who don't have these conditions, we are sharing for others and giving our happiness—and taking their suffering. Right now, we have enjoyment, but many beings are suffering in hospitals with this disease. So those who get the disease have so much pain and suffering. If one person gets it, whole families suffer, right? They experience fear.

We have to bring this to our mind and use this object for our Tonglen meditation. Tonglen is exchanging. Actually, Tonglen meditation is a deeper practice of love and compassion. Tong means giving. Tong is giving love. Tong is love meditation. Len is taking. It is compassion meditation. It is very simple really. Tonglen is really only two words, right. Tong is love meditation. Len is compassion meditation.

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This is a special method. Yogis practicing use this Tonglen meditation. They transform. They change.

As long as we have mindfulness, we can use this practice every day. You see homeless people with no homes, no food—people who are suffering. You can use this practice for them. You see animals suffering all the time. We can use this practice for them. Then you see the news reported. Mostly we have bad news. There is no good news. The reason is that no one is showing the good news. So I am going to make positive news next time. Right now, all the news is negative news. We can use this

meditation to watch the news, too. When you see a disaster, right away closes your eyes. Use this Tonglen meditation.

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First, we have to know how to use this meditation and when we are going to use this practice. You go outside and you see a bird go down into the water diving for a fish. The fish is suffering. You can do Tonglen meditation for them, too.

Then, when someone is suffering, we can use that as an object. We need some object for our Tonglen practice. The object is really a help for us. The object is a help for us to grow our compassion. Then that energy, the power of compassion, is a help for that, too.

We cannot release their suffering right away, but we can release the cause. We can create a positive karmic imprint for them. This is a help for them. That's why Tonglen meditation is not helpful to them right away in the beginning. We are removing the cause, not the result. This meditation Khenpo Munsel shared for Garchen Rinpoche is focused on the cause.

Some Tonglen meditation is focused on the result. In fact, most Tonglen meditation is focused on the result of taking others suffering and giving happiness.

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So Khenpo Munsel gave this Tonglen teaching to Garchen Rinpoche—actually not just Garchen Rinpoche, but many teachers in the prison. He said that first we have to recognize all sentient beings have Buddha nature. We all have the same nature. We have to recognize that. We have that nature, but we are suffering in samsara. We have to recognize that all beings are suffering in samsara.

We also have to recognize that we want happiness. All these beings want happiness. We have to cultivate thinking that way. Then, what we have to do at practice time is recognize where all of this suffering comes from. This suffering all comes from the root cause of grasping—self-grasping.

First is taking meditation. Tong—the name—goes first. But when you practice, Len goes first. What we are going to do is Len. First, we recognize that all beings are suffering—that I already shared. When we cultivate this thinking, compassion comes. We recognize where this suffering comes from. Suffering's cause is self-grasping. As long as beings have self-grasping, then the result—suffering—is endless.

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What we are going to take is Len. Len is taking the cause of suffering (self-grasping), not the result. If you take all their suffering, it is not going to really benefit them. So, the deeper level is taking all sentient beings' self-grasping.

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So how do we take self-grasping? First, we have to visualize that in our navel level is a fire flame. We have the image here. In Tummo, we meditate below the navel. But in Tonglen, it is ok to meditate in the navel. Just so long as you have fire here, in the navel level.

So all of the sentient beings self-grasping is taken in. It is the same as like pouring oil on the flame. We take in self-grasping (through breathing in, down to the navel). It becomes oil on the fire and becomes

an explosion. We see that all self-grasping is burning. The self-grasping we take in from all other beings is burning. The fire fueled by the oil of self-grasping becomes strong.

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So the fire has heat and warmth, right? It is representative of love. We are sending love for others—love for other beings. So we exhale, sending love for other beings. Then visualize all beings are free from suffering.

When you do Tonglen meditation that is taking suffering (instead of self-grasping), it is focused on the result. That is not really effective.

In Khenpo Munsel's Tonglen, first you are taking all of the causes of suffering. It is taking in self-grasping. It is like pouring oil. It is like taking cooking oil, or gasoline oil--think about it like that—into your body. Then it is like an explosion and all other sentient beings' self-grasping is burned. Then you have warmth and heat, because a fire has warmth and heat. You visualize the warmth and heat as your love you are sending to others. Then the beings suffering is removed. The results are then removed. When you send love, you remove the results—suffering.

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OK, so that is the way we have to meditate this practice. You should follow your breath. When you breathe in, it is taking other beings' self-grasping, like gasoline, into your body. The fire burns. Then send love to others. This practice is very special. I heard it from Garchen Rinpoche. He received this teaching from Khenpo Munsel. Do you have any questions?

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Do you recognize the difference from other Tonglen meditations? Other Tonglen meditations don't really visualize a fire flame. Secondly, by closing eyes and taking in other beings suffering, some people feel like they are having a heart attack here (pointing to chest). You know, it is too much in the heart. Because you know, holding suffering here is hard. Taking in others suffering and holding it here is hard for people.

This one is like a fire, an explosion. Everything is burnt. You don't have to hold on to other beings self-grasping. At the same time, it burns our self-grasping, too. Then send love to others. Remove their suffering. Recognize that all beings then have happiness.

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So that is the way we have to meditate this Tonglen. OK? So you recognize the difference in this Tonglen meditation. When we do this one, you see Tonglen meditation needs a special object. It means we really have to be thinking about suffering beings.

Let's visualize those who have this disease, coronavirus. Think about that. These people are suffering. The suffering is caused due to their self-grasping. We pull their self-grasping into our heart and it is burned there. The same thing, we send love to them and then visualize we remove their suffering. We remove their illness. Let's use this practice to do that.

(22:09)

(meditate)

